

## After God's Heart

The Bible calls David "*a man after God's own heart*" twice. The first time was by Samuel when he anointed David to be backslidden King Saul's successor: "*But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart.*" (I Samuel 13:14) The second time was in Acts 13:22 when Paul was teaching in Antioch. He quoted what God had said about David: '*I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.*' We know that David lived a far from perfect life, so what was it that earned him this commendation from God? We will be looking at the life of David, as well as some of the people in his life, to see what attributes and actions were displayed in their lives. Hopefully, we can learn about them and apply it to our lives today as we pursue God's heart ourselves.

The Bible mentions the heart almost 1,000 times, so it must be important. Genesis 1:26 tells us that we were made in the image and likeness of God; we have a heart because God does. Our heart is that spiritual part of us where our emotions and desires dwell. We know that God has emotions and desires as well.

The human heart, in its natural condition, is evil, treacherous and deceitful because we are born in sin. Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?*" Sin affects us deeply and we are often blind to how pervasive it is. We may not even understand our own heart, but God does. Psalm 44:21 says that God "knows the secrets of the heart." John 2:24-25 reveals that Jesus "*knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.*" He knows us inside out and there is nothing that is hidden from Him. Jesus pointed out in Mark 7:21-23, "*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.*"

So how can we solve our heart problem? Our heart must be changed. The only way this can happen is by the power of God when we put our faith in Him. Then begins our journey to know the heart of God; who He is, what He desires, His will, and His purposes. Reading the Word of God is important because it reveals His heart to us. The whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, shows us who God is and what He is like. Studying Jesus and His life also reveals the heart of God. Since Jesus and the Father are one, Christ was a living example of God on earth. Spending time in prayer also helps us to know God's heart. The more we know Him, the more our wills and desires become the same as His.

What does it mean to be a person after God's heart? It means your life is in harmony with the Lord. What is important to Him is important to you. What burdens Him burdens you. God wants our heart to be completely His. Be honest about sin in our life. No locked closets or secret hiding places - give it all to Him. Admit sin when he reveals it and allow Him to work in you: be willing to change. Remember God is not fooled by outward appearances. He looks at the heart.

Our study will come from I & II Samuel, I Chronicles, and I Kings. We will be looking at the lives of Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, and David. The setting is in the highlands in the land of Israel; basically where they invaded and settled when they entered the promised land. The major cities of the books are: Shiloh, Ramah, Gibeah, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem. Numerous other tribes and peoples dwelled alongside them, often instigating conflict and causing the Israelites to stray from their faith. The two nations that posed the biggest threat at that time were the Philistines and Ammonites. I & II Samuel cover about 135 years of history beginning in 1105 B.C. when Samuel was born and ending with the last words of David around 971 B.C. It begins at a time when the twelve tribes of Israel had long been violating the rules, ethics, and virtues of leadership God laid out for them. The priesthood was corrupt, the ark of the covenant was not at the tabernacle, idolatry was being practiced, and the judges were dishonest. Israel was basically in shambles. These books cover how Israel transformed from a loosely knit group of tribes under judges to a unified nation headed by a king.

Some interesting facts about this time period:

- 1189 years after Noah and the flood (2294 BC)
  - 350 years after the Exodus from Egypt (1445 BC)
  - 300 years after Moses died and Joshua entered the Promised Land
  - Babylonian captivity is less than 200 years away
  - 1100 years until the birth of the Messiah
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- Iron was already being used for weapons and tools (basically controlled by the Philistines at this time)
  - China had already invented gunpowder
  - Stonehenge, in England, was already 1400 years old
  - The Great Wall of China had been standing over 500 years
  - If the Trojan War was a historical event, it happened 150 years before
  - In Central America, the Olmec civilization was just getting started building their big stone temples and using writing; they were also starting to use rubber

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;  
And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalm 139:23-24